



Happy New Year! It's been said that an optimist stays up until midnight to see the New Year in and a pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves. Given the economic difficulties of 2009 many people (both optimists and pessimists) were happy to wave the year a hearty good-bye.

Now a fresh new year - and a whole new decade - is stretching out in front of us. It's a wonderful time of endless possibilities and limitless potential. It's a clean white canvas inviting us to paint the next big scenes in our lives. This New Year issue is chockfull of inspiration, ideas, examples, and habit forming action plans. May 2010 be your best year yet!

## **FIVE RESOLUTIONS TO LEAD, NOT FOLLOW OR WALLOW IN 2010**

Too often the New Year is just a new start for old habits. Here are six resolutions or personal growth goals to help you get a new start on new - or renewed - habits.

- Practice optimism and staying positive through set backs and constant change.
- Recognize and take early steps to avoid getting pulled down by uncertainty, organizational change, or stress and energy.
- Use technology as an enabling tool, don't let it drive you. Don't confuse information (such as e-mail) with communication (having conversations). Beware of the differences and use the right approach for each situation.
- Align and play to your strengths. Explore and know your strengths to assure you're in the right career/assignment/project to consistently bring out your best.
- Build connections, networks, and your personal brand. Make continual deposits in your relationship bank accounts to influence change, strengthen teamwork, and grow your support systems.
- Keep yourself growing through continuous personal improvement. Recognize the signs of career/personal stagnation and strengthening habits of personal growth.

Artists mix just three primary colors to paint their masterpieces filled with a vast array of hues, shapes, and details to evoke the full spectrum of human emotions. We too have three primary choices to mix, match, and shape each hour, and day. Those choices evoke a range of emotions and responses in us and others.

Our basic choices are to lead, follow, or wallow. These choices are especially critical - and most difficult - w

experience setbacks, negative change, or crisis points in our personal and professional lives.

### **Lead**

That means taking the initiative to make the best of a bad hand that's been dealt. It's living with ambiguity and while exploring and creating a broad array of options. It's facing tough times squarely and not sugarcoating them, fleeing from difficult situations or touchy conversations. To lead is to focus beyond what is to what could be. It involves gratitude and looking for opportunities to celebrate and recognize progress. When we're leading we're thinking "I am going to do something about this," "How can I capitalize on this change?" or "I've overcome this before and I can do it again."

### **Follow**

When faced with a setback, major change, or difficulty, many people sit in following mode. This often involves waiting to see what else might happen. Following means looking to others for direction. On the up side, following might mean analyzing the situation to understand what happened and what the options are in dealing with it. On the down side, following means feeling helpless and cynical. When we're following we're thinking "Somebody should do something about this," "I am not sure what to do next," or, "I am just lying low, keeping my head down."

### **Wallow**

To wallow is to take a bad situation and make it worse. Wallowing often involves searching for someone to point the finger at. One sign of wallowing is to crave certainty and long for the "good old days." Wallowing causes us to become overwhelmed by the problem and narrow our field of vision to few or no options. To wallow is to be a victim of a feeling of helplessness and conspiracies with lots of "they" talk; "They are out to get us," "They don't understand us," "They never listen to us."

[Click here](#) for a quick quiz on whether you tend to mostly lead, follow, or wallow. Scoring: 1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree

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